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WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Rep. Charlie Melancon today voted to make our nation safer by implementing the unfulfilled recommendations of the bipartisan 9/11 Commission on improving homeland security, preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, and developing strategies for preventing the spread of Islamic terrorism. The House overwhelmingly passed the bill by a vote of 299 to 188.

**"The first and most important responsibility of our government is to defend Americans from harm. I am proud that one of the first bills passed by the new Congress will strengthen our national security and better protect our citizens from another terrorist attack," Rep. Melancon said. "Putting into practice the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission is a task that is long overdue, and I urge the Senate to swiftly pass this bill and send it to the President for his signature."**

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**Rep. Melancon continued, "Just yesterday, 9/11 Commission Vice Chair Lee Hamilton stated, 'The bottom line is that if this bill, H.R. 1, is enacted, funded and implemented, then the American people will be safer.' I couldn't agree more. Nothing - not cost, or inconvenience, or lack of resources - should deter us from doing everything in our power to protect Americans from terrorism."**

The bill includes a number of long-overdue steps to substantially improve homeland security, including:

- Creating a stand-alone grant program to provide first responders with the type of equipment that allows them to communicate with one another during emergencies;
- Phasing in a requirement of 100% inspection of the cargo carried on passenger aircraft over the next three years (most of this cargo is still not inspected);
- Quickly accelerating the installation of explosive detection systems for unchecked baggage at the nation's airports;
- Improving explosive detection systems at passenger checkpoints at the nation's airports; and
- Phasing in a requirement of 100% scanning of U.S.-bound shipping containers over the next five years.

The bill also includes provisions to better prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, such as:

- Strengthening the Cooperative Threat Reduction ("Nunn-Lugar") program that focuses on securing loose nuclear materials in the former Soviet Union;

- Providing increased tools for the Proliferation Security Initiative, through which the U.S. and participating countries interdict WMD; and
- Establishing a U.S. Coordinator for the Prevention of WMD Proliferation and Terrorism at the White House, who would serve as a presidential advisor on proliferation issues.

Finally, the bill also includes provisions to reduce the appeal of extremism, including:

- Providing for the establishment of a Middle East Foundation, to promote economic opportunities, education reform, human rights and democratic processes in the countries of the Middle East; and
- Promoting quality educational opportunities for youth in Arab and other predominantly Muslim countries, including expanding U.S. scholarship and exchange programs.

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